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Comprehensive dialogue with United Nations agencies and funds

Information received from entities of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The present note provides a summary of five reports on the progress and implementation of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, submitted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Population Fund. The full reports are available on the Permanent Forum website (http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii).

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I. Introduction

1. In November 2011, the secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues sent a questionnaire to United Nations agencies and other intergovernmental organizations seeking information on:

(a) Activities relating to the theme of the eleventh session of the Permanent Forum: "The Doctrine of Discovery: its enduring impact on indigenous peoples and the right to redress for past conquests (articles 28 and 37 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples)";

(b) Progress and obstacles in implementing the Permanent Forum's recommendations;

(c) Brief accounts of the progress made since 2009 towards the goals and objectives of the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People;

(d) Specific information on how the recipients had responded to the Permanent Forum's recommendation to adopt policies on indigenous issues.

Responses were received from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The full reports are available on the Permanent Forum website (http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii). Summaries of the responses are set out below.

II. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

2. OHCHR has continued its activities to inform key actors about the work of mechanisms dealing with human rights and indigenous peoples. In her report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/18/26 and Corr.1), the High Commissioner highlighted OHCHR engagement at the country level to monitor, promote and protect the human rights of indigenous peoples. She also listed various technical cooperation and capacity-building activities in OHCHR country operations.

3. In addition to supporting human rights treaty bodies and the Human Rights Council's universal periodic review mechanism, which often examines issues concerning indigenous peoples, OHCHR continues to support two mandates devoted to the rights of indigenous peoples. It assists the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples in implementing his mandate, which includes dealing with communications and carrying out country visits; and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Since the previous reporting period, the Special Rapporteur has issued press releases and statements on Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Canada, Costa Rica, Norway and Peru. He also undertook a country mission to Argentina from 27 November to 7 December 2011, during which he urged the Government to accord higher priority to indigenous issues.

4. In addition, OHCHR supported cooperation and interaction between the three United Nations mandates devoted to indigenous peoples through a coordination meeting in the margins of the fourth session of the Expert Mechanism. It continues

to advocate and advance the rights of indigenous peoples through its thematic work and by providing information on indigenous issues to United Nations treaty bodies and other United Nations special procedures mandates.

5. Further to the Permanent Forum's recommendation at its tenth session that OHCHR and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) should continue their work in support of national human rights institutions (E/2011/43-E/C.19/2011/14, para. 11), OHCHR has markedly stepped up its engagement with national institutions on indigenous issues, since such institutions play an instrumental role in advancing the implementation at the country level of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

6. Further to the Permanent Forum's recommendation at its tenth session that, among other things, attention should focus on increasing the understanding of indigenous peoples' underlying material rights to land and the need to give material rights priority over process rights (E/2011/43-E/C.19/2011/14, para. 20), the Indigenous Peoples and Minorities Section of OHCHR has prepared a compilation of international standards on land and indigenous peoples. OHCHR has continued to advocate land rights of indigenous peoples in various forums. The issue of consultation and free, prior and informed consent with regard to extractive industries and development projects was specifically addressed in the High Commissioner's statement to the media on 9 August 2011, the International Day of the World's Indigenous People.

7. Further to the Permanent Forum's recommendation at its tenth session in which it reiterated its long-standing position of encouraging the United Nations, its organs and specialized agencies, as well as all States, to adopt a human rights-based approach (E/2011/43-E/C.19/2011/14, para. 25), a representative of the Indigenous Peoples and Minorities Section participated as a resource person along with the International Labour Organization (ILO) in a training session in the Congo organized by the United Nations country team/UNICEF and the secretariat of the Permanent Forum.

8. At its tenth session, the Permanent Forum noted the number of interventions by indigenous peoples alarmed at the denial of their right to free, prior and informed consent in relation to extractive industries and other forms of large- and small-scale development (E/2011/43-E/C.19/2011/14, para. 38). OHCHR is supporting the Expert Mechanism as it continues to build on its 2011 study on indigenous peoples and the right to participate in decision-making, focusing on extractive industries.

9. In line with its recommendation at its ninth session, by which the Permanent Forum encouraged OHCHR, ILO and UNDP to strengthen their collaborative framework and partnership for the promotion and implementation of indigenous peoples' rights through joint country programmes aimed at building capacity and establishing mechanisms for consultation, participation and consent (E/2010/43-E/C.19/2010/15, para. 39), OHCHR entered into a memorandum of understanding with ILO and UNDP to establish the United Nations Indigenous Peoples' Partnership. In 2011, UNICEF and UNFPA joined the initiative, which was formally launched on 20 May 2011 with support from the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General. The key aim of this initiative is to facilitate the implementation of international standards on indigenous peoples, in particular the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the 1989 ILO Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (No. 169).

10. At its tenth session, the Permanent Forum called upon all member States and United Nations agencies to respond to the annual questionnaire from its secretariat to provide information on reliable practices that lead to the full and effective implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (E/2011/43-E/C.19/2011/14, para. 49). OHCHR so responded.

11. Furthermore, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 18/8 (A/66/53/Add.1), the Expert Mechanism is undertaking a survey of States Members of the United Nations and their strategies for implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The findings will be presented in draft form to the Expert Mechanism at its fifth session, to be held in July 2012, and in final form to the Human Rights Council at its twenty-first session, to be held in September 2012.

12. At its tenth session, the Permanent Forum welcomed a third United Nations seminar on indigenous peoples' understanding and interpretation of treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements (E/2011/43-E/C.19/2011/14, para. 94). In this connection, a side event on advancing dialogue on treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements between States and indigenous peoples within the United Nations system was organized in the margins of the fourth session of the Expert Mechanism by the International Indian Treaty Council in cooperation with OHCHR.

13. In response to the Permanent Forum's comments at its tenth session concerning the recommendations made by a wide range of indigenous peoples' caucuses and representatives with regard to the establishment of a global steering committee to conduct the preparatory process for the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (E/2011/43-E/C.19/2011/14, para. 126), OHCHR draws attention to Human Rights Council resolution 18/8, in which the Council requested the Expert Mechanism to discuss the World Conference and, together with other relevant mechanisms on indigenous peoples' issues, to contribute to the exploration of the modalities for the meeting, including indigenous peoples' participation in the World Conference and its preparatory process. The Expert Mechanism is currently engaged in the preparatory processes associated with the Conference.

III. United Nations Children's Fund

14. UNICEF continues to be active at the country level, where it is supporting and promoting various programmes specifically designed to advance the rights of indigenous peoples, ranging from bilingual and intercultural education and culturally sensitive health services to birth registration and efforts to combat violence, abuse and exploitation. Its mission is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The former applies to all children, and the principle of non-discrimination as articulated in its article 2 is at the core of UNICEF work. The approach taken by UNICEF in this regard is further inspired by ILO Convention No. 169, the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (as adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 47/135) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

15. On the basis of the advice received during its comprehensive dialogue with the Forum in May 2011, UNICEF developed a programme strategy on indigenous and minority issues to guide country offices in programming with national partners. For example, UNICEF, together with UNFPA, UNESCO, UNDP and the World Health Organization (WHO), is studying social, cultural and legal institutions of indigenous peoples and their impact on the rights of children and women in the Congo. It is hoped that this will form the first in a series of studies aimed at a deeper understanding of the social, cultural and legal settings and contexts of indigenous peoples and their implications for the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

16. Following the comprehensive dialogue between UNICEF and the Permanent Forum and the resulting recommendation that UNICEF prepare a report on the state of the world's children with a thematic focus on indigenous children, UNICEF has developed a frame of reference that will guide the development of a global analysis on the situation of indigenous and minority children. In this initiative, UNICEF will be partnering with the Permanent Forum, interested UNICEF national committees, the Independent Expert on minority issues and Minority Rights Group International.

17. UNICEF is currently exploring the possibility of developing a fellowship for young indigenous people, the implementation of which will be subject to the availability of financial resources. It is also arranging for its Division of Human Resources to brief interested members of the Indigenous Youth Caucus regarding employment options at UNICEF and the United Nations, during the eleventh session of the Permanent Forum.

18. UNICEF continues to support intercultural bilingual education policies and programmes throughout Latin America and the Caribbean in conjunction with indigenous organizations at the local and national levels. UNICEF-supported interventions are based on the needs and priorities identified in consultation with local indigenous organizations and local governments, and refer to a wide range of activities, such as textbook development in indigenous languages (e.g. in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Ecuador, Paraguay and Peru); teacher training (e.g. in Argentina, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chile, Ecuador, Mexico and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)); and development of indigenous alphabets and dictionaries (e.g. in Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Paraguay). An assessment of studies related to indigenous child-rearing practices is being finalized and will soon be available.

19. The comprehensive dialogue between UNICEF and the Permanent Forum showed that there was a need for a strategic approach to address the disturbing gaps between the richest and poorest children — in particular indigenous children — in both developed and developing countries. UNICEF is strengthening its collaboration with its affiliated national committees on issues affecting indigenous children.

20. UNICEF worked with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Permanent Forum to ensure that the voices of indigenous youth were heard at the High-level Meeting on Youth, which was held in New York on 25 and 26 July 2011.

21. UNICEF has published and circulated terms of reference for the development of a report on the situation of indigenous children in Latin America and the Caribbean. It is hoped that UNICEF will be able to share the initial findings at the eleventh session of the Forum.

22. To tackle the problem of limited data and information relating to violence against indigenous women and girls, UNICEF is undertaking, in collaboration with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), ILO, UNFPA, WHO and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, a joint study on violence against indigenous girls, adolescents and youth. The study focuses on education, reproductive health, and community and domestic settings in the global and regional contexts of Asia, Africa and Latin America, and includes in-depth country case studies on Guatemala, Kenya and the Philippines. The study examines, among other things, the impact of intersecting situations such as location, disability and the various age groups that comprise the life cycle of female children, adolescents and young people. Its objectives are to examine and analyse the context, nature, causes and consequences of violence; to identify the state of, and gaps in, knowledge and to analyse the problem; to describe and analyse the availability and effectiveness of preventive and protective services provided by States and non-State actors; and to make recommendations in relation to further research and data collection, in addition to policy and programmatic interventions pertinent to the global, regional and national levels.

23. In May 2011, UNICEF joined ILO, OHCHR, UNDP and UNFPA to launch the United Nations Indigenous Peoples' Partnership, which focuses on developing national capacities to promote indigenous rights through consultation and participation mechanisms at the country and regional levels. Furthermore, UNICEF continues to contribute to the work of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues. It participates in the Group's annual meeting and, at the most recent meeting, in November 2011, provided insight into the interface between legal reforms and the rights of indigenous children.

IV. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

24. At its tenth session, the Permanent Forum made several recommendations relating to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee and its advisory bodies (E/2011/43-E/C.19/2011/14, paras. 40-42).

25. At its thirty-fifth session, the Committee prepared a draft vision and strategic action plan to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention). In paragraph 10 of its decision 35 COM 12D, it acknowledged the statements made by the representative of the Permanent Forum at its thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth sessions, held in Brasilia in 2010 and Paris in 2011, respectively, and noted that UNESCO was in the process of preparing a policy with regard to its programmes on indigenous peoples. It further noted that those considerations should be included in the theme of the fortieth anniversary, "World Heritage and Sustainable Development: the Role of Local Communities". It also recognized indigenous peoples in a total of 26 decisions concerning the state of conservation of properties and new inscriptions on the World Heritage List, and in the overall periodic report for the African region.

26. In response to the above-mentioned recommendations made in paragraph 41 of the report of the Forum on its tenth session and in addition to the statutory meetings

under the World Heritage Convention, meetings were held with the advisory bodies (the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the International Council on Monuments and Sites and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property) and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre to improve processes related to the state of conservation and evaluation of new nominations with regard to indigenous issues.

27. In partnership with OHCHR and the secretariats of the Permanent Forum and the Convention on Biological Diversity, and with support from the Government of Denmark, UNESCO, through the Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) programme, continued to implement a global forum for indigenous peoples, small islands and vulnerable communities, known as "Climate Frontlines".

28. UNESCO continues to work with the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre to develop an indicator on linguistic diversity and numbers of speakers of indigenous languages, although funding continues to pose problems.

29. From 30 May to 1 June 2011, UNESCO held an unprecedented joint expert meeting entitled "Towards UNESCO guidelines on language policies: a tool for language assessment and planning", at which more than 40 international experts working in areas such as linguistics, anthropology, education, media and the Internet worked on guidelines for Governments to assist in forging effective policies to support language revitalization, decrease loss of endangered languages and revise the language endangerment criteria used by UNESCO. The event also focused on how to improve current approaches in support of the world's some 6,000 languages, tackling all stages of the process from vitality assessment to strong presence in cyberspace.

30. The UNESCO office in Bangkok, as part of the Asia Multilingual Education Working Group, is seeking to break down barriers hampering access to high-quality education for ethnolinguistic communities by coordinating the provision of technical and substantive support to multilingual education initiatives and related policy advocacy throughout Asia.

31. UNESCO, through its communication and information sector, uploaded new comprehensive training materials supporting indigenous languages to the online Open Training Platform.

32. In 2011, UNESCO, through the LINKS programme, worked with a group of Mayangna bilingual and intercultural education professionals to develop primary school education materials that would support use in classrooms of the UNESCO publication *Mayangna Knowledge of the Interdependence of People and Nature: Fish and Turtles*.

33. In Solomon Islands, a wiki has been created in the local language based on the indigenous knowledge of the peoples of Marovo Lagoon. It was initially built using some 1,200 terms in Marovo and English contained in the 2005 UNESCO publication *Reef and Rainforest: An Environmental Encyclopedia of Marovo Lagoon, Solomon Islands*.

34. In relation to the recommendation of the Permanent Forum at its tenth session, in which it urged Member States, in collaboration with United Nations agencies and

regional intergovernmental organizations, to increase their efforts to combat forced labour and human trafficking and to put in place adequate instruments to protect victims, paying particular attention to indigenous peoples and the restoration of victims' rights (E/2011/43-E/C.19/2011/14, para. 106), the Bangkok office implemented a project on decreasing vulnerability among ethnic minorities in China and Thailand, in which culturally appropriate audio-visual materials in ethnic minority languages are produced to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS and human trafficking. The first two films were produced in Akha and Wa, languages spoken in Thailand and China, respectively.

35. A number of elements of intangible cultural heritage were inscribed on the lists of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage during the sixth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, held in Bali, Indonesia, in November 2011. The nominations were made with the free, prior and informed consent of the communities concerned, a compulsory requirement for the inscription of such elements on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding and the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, and for the inclusion of programmes, projects or activities in the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices.

36. Within the framework of General Assembly resolution 65/166, on culture and development, the Bangkok office continues to promote a cultural approach to development activities. The Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific has been implementing activities relevant to indigenous issues in South-East Asia, most notably in Indonesia, the Philippines and Timor-Leste.

V. Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

37. The parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity remain committed to the participation of indigenous and local community representatives in the work of the Convention, as shown in a substantial report on indigenous and local community participation submitted to the Permanent Forum at its ninth session, in 2010 (E/C.19/2010/3), and in an extensive report submitted in December 2009 to OHCHR; as well as in the contribution by the secretariat to an OHCHR expert study on indigenous peoples and the right to participate in decision-making undertaken by the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Convention remains the sole multilateral environmental agreement to have an established voluntary fund to facilitate the participation of indigenous and local community representatives in meetings held under the Convention.[1]

38. At its tenth meeting, the Conference of the Parties also finalized the negotiation of, and adopted in its decision X/42, the Code of Ethical Conduct to Ensure Respect for the Cultural and Intellectual Heritage of Indigenous and Local Communities Relevant to the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity (the Tkarihwaié:ri code of ethical conduct)[2] and invited parties and Governments to make use of its elements as a model to guide the development of

[1] See decision VIII/5, section D, of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, available from http://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-08/cop-08-dec-06-en.pdf.

[2] Available from http://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-10/cop-10-dec-42-en.pdf.

models of codes of ethical conduct for research, access to, use, exchange and management of information concerning traditional knowledge. The Code provides for prior informed consent and/or approval and involvement of indigenous and local communities.

39. The mandate established within the programme of work on the implementation of article 8 (j), and related provisions of the Convention (as set out in the annex to decision V/16 of the Conference of the Parties)[3] is to develop guidelines and principles. Although it is common practice for such guidelines to remain voluntary, they are, however, adopted by consensus of the parties to the Convention, carry an ethical and moral weight and can over time become established standards in customary international law. Parties report regularly to the secretariat, including on actions taken to implement decisions of the Conference of the Parties, which encompass voluntary standards and guidelines.

40. Pursuant to decision X/43 of the Conference of the Parties[4] and in coordination with work on indicators for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, the secretariat is currently focusing on making operational the three indicators adopted for traditional knowledge and is also exploring the development of indicators for article 10 (c), which covers customary use of biological resources in accordance with traditional cultural practices that are compatible with conservation or sustainable use requirements. Inter-agency coordination is provided by the United Nations Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues and the indicators focal point within the secretariat of the Permanent Forum. The Convention is the first entity to begin making indicators relevant to indigenous and local communities operational.

41. At its tenth session, the Permanent Forum stated that affirmation of the status of indigenous peoples as "peoples" was important in fully respecting and protecting their human rights (E/2011/43-E/C.19/2011/14, para. 26). Accordingly, consistent with its 2010 report (E/2010/43-E/C.19/2010/15), it called upon the parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and especially including the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization to the Convention, to adopt the terminology "indigenous peoples and local communities" as an accurate reflection of the distinct identities developed by those entities since the adoption of the Convention almost 20 years previously. Although the parties considered the recommendation, which reaffirmed similar recommendations made by the Permanent Forum at its ninth session, they decided to maintain their existing practice.

42. At its tenth session, the Permanent Forum reiterated its long-standing position of encouraging the United Nations, its organs and specialized agencies, as well as all States, to adopt a human rights-based approach (E/2011/43-E/C.19/2011/14, para. 25). That approach is implemented by the secretariat of the Convention by ensuring the effective participation of indigenous and local communities in all meetings of interest to them. As indicated above, the Convention is the sole multilateral environmental agreement to have an established voluntary fund for the participation of indigenous and local communities in its meetings. Furthermore, mechanisms enabling such communities to participate in the work of the Ad Hoc

[3] Available from http://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/?id=7158.

[4] Available from http://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-10/cop-10-dec-43-en.pdf.

Open-ended Inter-Sessional Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions are unprecedented in the United Nations system. It is, however, important to differentiate between the secretariat and the parties to the Convention. Because of the diversity of cultural, political, legal and economic circumstances in which indigenous and local communities may live, matters concerning the enjoyment and exercise of rights, while acknowledged by Governments, remain the subject of national negotiations, particularly where shared landscapes are involved.

43. In paragraph 27 of the report of its tenth session (E/2011/43-E/C.19/2011/14), the Permanent Forum reiterates previous recommendations considered by the parties when negotiating the Nagoya Protocol. While rights to genetic resources are recognized in the Protocol, the matter of access is deferred to the national level (in accordance with domestic legislation). This should not be surprising, given the diverse political and legal situations in which indigenous and local communities live and the non-exclusivity of rights over genetic resources that occur across boundaries and landscapes. The Protocol is fully consistent with the equitable-sharing provisions of the Convention and safeguards customary use and exchange of both genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge in article 12, paragraph 4. The Protocol also contains several paragraphs directly relevant to indigenous and local communities, including a final preambular paragraph affirming that nothing in the Protocol is to be construed as diminishing or extinguishing the existing rights of indigenous and local communities. With regard to the comment in paragraph 27 of the report of the Forum on its tenth session that "all rights based on customary use must be safeguarded and not only 'established' rights", it is clear from the outcome of the negotiations that the parties were unwilling or unable to tackle issues concerning future non-established claims to rights.

44. The secretariat of the Convention remains a committed partner of the Permanent Forum, as evinced by its 11-year partnership with and participation at every session of the Forum, including the in-depth dialogue held in 2010. The secretariat has offered opportunities for both the Forum members and participants to receive capacity-building assistance in relation to the Convention and its protocols and actively encourages broad participation in the work of the Convention. Nevertheless, obstacles remain, including the formulation of the Forum's recommendations, which fall beyond the scope of the Working Group on article 8 (j) and the Convention. This would indicate that the Forum members may benefit from information-sharing, capacity-building opportunities and participation in Convention meetings. The secretariat of the Forum or the programme officer for article 8 (j) who attends the annual sessions of the Forum may also assist members by providing practical advice, on request, in the drafting of future recommendations to international agencies to ensure that they fall within the mandates of the agencies in question and can thus be made operational. The secretariat of the Convention would encourage members actively to seek the views of all indigenous peoples who follow the work of the Convention in formulating future recommendations to ensure that those recommendations enjoy the broad support of indigenous peoples from all regions.

VI. United Nations Population Fund

45. UNFPA has been an important actor in promoting the rights of indigenous peoples, particularly indigenous women's rights to sexual and reproductive health

and to enjoy protection against all forms of violence and discrimination, particularly gender-based violence, in accordance with articles 21-24 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

46. Its main aim has been the reduction of maternal and infant mortality among indigenous women and newborns, and the prevention of HIV and of teenage pregnancies. To attain these outcomes, UNFPA contributed to legal reform processes and to the formulation of policy frameworks, programmes and protocols that recognize the importance of increasing access to culturally acceptable sexual and reproductive health services, goods and facilities.

47. UNFPA is also contributing to the development of culturally acceptable health models at the subnational level with a view to ensuring recognition of indigenous peoples' right to maintain traditional, safe, medicinal practices and the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health.

48. In 2011, UNFPA advocated the inclusion of issues germane to indigenous peoples in its country programmes and related programmatic processes. It also joined the United Nations Indigenous Peoples Partnership as one of its board members, together with ILO, OHCHR, UNDP and UNICEF.

49. Together with UNICEF, ILO and UN-Women, UNFPA is collaborating on a study on violence against indigenous girls, adolescents and young people aimed at identifying vulnerabilities, informing programming at all levels and tracking progress towards preventing violence. A final report will be presented to the Permanent Forum at its eleventh session.

50. UNFPA is also working in six African countries — the Congo, the Central African Republic, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania — with a number of indigenous peoples. The main areas of work have been supporting the formulation and implementation of legal frameworks for the protection of indigenous peoples in the Congo and Rwanda; undertaking efforts to reduce maternal mortality in the Central African Republic and Uganda; promoting the empowerment of indigenous women in terms of gender equality and human rights in the Congo, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania; and tackling HIV infections among indigenous peoples, particularly young people, in Namibia.

51. UNFPA is working with indigenous peoples in Asia and the Pacific, responding to the urgent need to reduce maternal and infant mortality among ethnic minorities by improving access to high-quality and culturally acceptable reproductive health services.

52. Through its regional office in Panama and its country offices in Latin America and the Caribbean, UNFPA has forged cross-cutting partnerships with indigenous peoples, indigenous women's organizations and networks, Governments, non-governmental organizations, universities and other United Nations agencies to address the recommendations of the Permanent Forum and the human rights and urgent needs of indigenous peoples. Its main work over the past decade has taken place in seven countries: Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama and Peru. Important work has begun in a further eight countries: Argentina, Belize, Chile, Costa Rica, Guyana, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Suriname.

53. In Argentina, UNFPA supported the National Council of Indigenous Women in implementing an itinerant school on the rights of indigenous women aimed at promoting indigenous women's leadership skills. It also carried out important work with indigenous migrant women from the Plurinational State of Bolivia, dealing with the discrimination and social and cultural barriers that limit their access to social programmes and health services.

54. In 2011, UNFPA worked with indigenous peoples of the Caribbean in Belize, Guyana and Suriname. Some key preliminary lessons extracted from that work are that there is a need to increase the cultural acceptability of programmes to enhance effectiveness; that it is important to ensure buy-in by indigenous local leaders where social and health services are concerned; and that there is a need to monitor and evaluate the impact of these interventions and to address sustainability and scaling-up issues by promoting national political commitment, including in terms of human resources and budgetary allocations, for these programmes.

55. A key contribution by UNFPA to the agenda of indigenous peoples has been in the realms of the promotion and implementation of intercultural reproductive health norms, policies and services, the prevention of HIV and gender-based violence, the empowerment of indigenous leaders and communities in decision-making and policy processes affecting them, the strengthening of indigenous institutions and health systems, and the promotion of data gathering and use with the inclusion of an ethnic perspective.

56. UNFPA has assisted in improving policy, performing research, establishing norms and developing protocols, tools and methodologies in the above-mentioned regions, and there is evidence that coherent strategies and approaches are being simultaneously implemented in all regions, with the greatest development observed in Latin America and the Caribbean.

57. There is a need for UNFPA and its partners — including its United Nations partners — to take this work a step further by evaluating key interventions to assess their impact on development and health targets. In addition, UNFPA must continuously mainstream the rights of indigenous peoples at the policy and programmatic levels, so that these will be institutionally owned and consolidated.

58. Lastly, there is a need to ensure that good practices are documented and shared through knowledge management practices and other means, within countries and across regions, as this will enhance the fund's capacity to accelerate indigenous peoples' rights within culturally appropriate development contexts.